

**Access to Microfinance & Improved Implementation of Policy Reform
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***Young Entrepreneurs Association Issue Advocacy:
Business Community, the Jordanian Public School System,
And Government Advocacy Program***

Final Report

**Deliverable for Business Association Initiative
Task 2.3.5 YEA Issues Advocacy
Contract No. 278-C-00-98-00029-00**

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YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ASSOCIATION

BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THE JORDANIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, AND GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Improving its educational system is an essential component to upgrading critical worker skills necessary for Jordan to become an information-based society and to compete successfully in the global world economy. To this end, the following summary illustrates the objective, strategy, and action plan of a YEA-led advocacy program directed at the business community and government.

Objective: *To develop a public school educational system that provides Jordanian students with the critical skills necessary to work in the projected information-based economy, and to compete successfully in the global marketplace.*

Strategy: *To achieve this goal, YEA will lead an advocacy program directed at the business community and the government, encompassing the following areas: English language skills; economic education; school-based technology; school curriculum modification; and school infrastructure improvements. A broad business association Coalition will be established, with a chairman selected from the group, and a full-time staff director chosen to facilitate the action plans discussed below. It is strongly suggested that the chairman of the Coalition also be the chairman of YEA. This will allow YEA to retain “ownership” and control over all elements of this project that emanate from the YEA’s position paper.*

Action Plan: *YEA has developed a series of business and government advocacy initiatives, or action plans, to achieve each strategy which, taken together, will enable YEA to accomplish its overall objective. These action plans are described below.*

NOTE: **Parenthesis after each element in each action plan indicates suggested timeline for completion of that task**

UPGRADING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Objective: *To improve English language proficiency (written and oral communication) among Jordanian public school students in grades 1 through 12.*

Strategy: *YEA-led business, higher education, and government advocacy programs.*

Action Plan:

- *Coalition staff will arrange a business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *In conjunction with Coalition members, the staff will develop a short position paper on the merits of English language training, and on alternative forms of teaching English, such as English language immersion, English as a Second Language or ESL, and non-traditional instructional tools like film, games, etc.). (two weeks)*
- *The business Coalition will commission private sector consultants to research the cost, and the rules and regulations, required to establish and finance a school, operated and funded by the business community, to train public school teachers in the English language, utilizing the alternative and non-traditional teaching methods described above. (one month)*
- *Coalition members and staff will devise a financial plan to acquire facilities and fund the business-operated school, and a plan to select teachers for training once the school is operational. (one month)*
- *Coalition staff will prepare a press release and arrange a press conference, also attended by business association leaders (members and staff), to announce the business community's support for government efforts to improve teaching English in the public schools through the teaching that will be provided by the business-operated school. (one week)*
- *Coalition members and staff will meet with the Minister of Education, and work with him and Ministry of Education officials to have the Ministry recognize the English language courses of the business-operated school, and adopt them as part of teacher evaluations for purposes of promotion and pay increases. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition members and staff hire teachers for the school. (two weeks)*

- *Coalition staff will work with the business-sponsored, English school instructors to develop a model curriculum for English language training. (three weeks)*
- *Coalition members and staff will meet with university and college officials to bring the model curriculum to their attention for their adoption. (one month)*

IMPROVING ECONOMIC EDUCATION

Objective: 1). *to improve the economic literacy of Jordanian public school students in grades 1 through 12; and 2). to improve economic understanding among the adult population in Jordan through the establishment of a business-community directed and funded research think tank.*

Strategy: *YEA-led business, university, and government advocacy programs.*

Action Plan 1:

- *Coalition staff will arrange a business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff will commission a local polling firm to conduct an opinion poll on adult and student knowledge of economics and business. It is anticipated that poll results will show that Jordanians of all ages are unfamiliar with basic economic concepts. (two weeks)*
- *In conjunction with Coalition members, the staff will develop a short briefing paper on the need to include economic literacy in the public school curriculum. The Economic Opportunities Youth Program (INJAZ) will be highlighted, and results from the opinion poll will form part of the business community's position paper. (two weeks)*
- *The Coalition staff will review the INJAZ program, and amend it where necessary according to the poll results and the business coalition's recommendations. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition members, through Coalition staff, will develop an action plan integrating an amended INJAZ program into the regular public school curriculum. (two weeks)*

- *In conjunction with Coalition members, Coalition staff will develop a short position paper on rationalizing the need for the adoption of the modified INJAZ program into the public school curriculum. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition staff will arrange a strategy session on the economic education initiative to include business associations, the Minister of Education, the Education Committee in Parliament, the Economic Consultative Council, and the High Education Forum. The strategy session will introduce this initiative to these attendees, and will seek their approval and assistance in integrating economic education into the public school curriculum. (two weeks)*
- *If the Minister of Education does not approve INJAZ initiative, Coalition members will meet with the Minister to introduce a plan to have the amended INJAZ model adopted as an extracurricular activity in all public schools. (one week)*
- *The Coalition staff will prepare a press release and arrange a press conference, also attended by business association leaders (members and staff) announcing coalition support for government efforts to introduce the INJAZ model (either as part of the regular curriculum or as an extracurricular activity). (one week)*
- *Coalition staff will identify and assign Coalition members the task of providing regular classroom instruction (lectures on business, economics, entrepreneurship and the like) to those schools that are now and will become part of the INJAZ program. (three weeks, then on-going)*
- *Coalition staff will work with Coalition members and the INJAZ Executive Director to develop and implement an internship program for INJAZ students. (two weeks, then on-going)*

Action Plan 2:

- *Coalition staff will arrange a business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff will prepare a brief position paper justifying the establishment of a business community sponsored and funded think tank; briefing paper will include estimated costs of operation. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition members and staff direct a business community initiative to secure funding. (two weeks, then on-going)*

- *Once funding is secured, members and staff hire think tank director. (three weeks)*
- *Coalition staff arranges a press conference to launch the think tank. (one week)*
- *Working with Coalition members, think tank director prepares a program of work, to include research papers, conferences, and seminars. (three weeks)*

SCHOOL-BASED TECHNOLOGY

Objective: *To: 1). provide free computers to public school teachers; 2). donate computers to public schools; 3). establish free computer training centers in selected populated areas for public school children; and 4). introduce Arabic software as a component of government-provided computers to the public schools.*

Strategy: *YEA-led business, higher education, and government advocacy programs.*

Action Plan 1:

- *Coalition staff will arrange business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff, working with coalition members, will develop short position paper outlining the rationale for free computers to public school teachers, and describing how the business community will complement this government initiative through donating computers to the public schools, and providing free computer training to public school teachers. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition staff and Coalition members will meet with the Minister of Education and other Ministry officials to present the position paper and request government commitment to fund this initiative. (one week)*
- *If campaign to have the government fund this initiative is unsuccessful, Coalition members will hold a press conference to inform the public that the business community will lead an initiative to train teachers in the use of computers, and will work toward guaranteeing free computers for teachers as a complement to the King's initiative to introduce computers into public school classrooms. A one-page*

summary of the position paper will be prepared for distribution to the press by Coalition staff. (one week)

Action Plan 2:

- *Coalition staff will arrange business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff will work with Coalition members to develop a business plan for implementing/funding this initiative; business plan will include contacts between Coalition members and their peers requesting donations of computers and/or funding for computer purchases that will be donated to public schools, and selection of recipient schools. (three weeks)*
- *Coalition staff will prepare a brief position paper providing the rationale for this business community initiative; the position paper will be used to convince businesses of the need for their involvement. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition staff and members will meet with the Minister of Education and other Ministry officials to determine the government's plan for allocating computers to the public schools in order to better complement government efforts. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff will prepare a press release and arrange a press conference, also attended by Coalition members and staff and the Minister of Education and other Ministry officials, announcing the launching of this initiative. (one week)*

Action Plan 3:

- *Coalition staff will arrange business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff will prepare a brief position paper providing a rationale for this business community initiative; the position paper will be used to solicit funding from businesses. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition staff and members will launch a campaign within the business community for funding this initiative. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition members will determine criteria for site(s) for computer center(s), and will establish centers as a function of pledges for financial support. (two weeks)*

- *Coalition staff will prepare a press release and arrange a press conference, also attended by coalition members and staff and the Minister of Education and other Ministry officials, announcing the launching of this initiative. (one week)*

Action Plan 4:

- *Coalition staff will arrange business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff, working with Coalition members, will develop short position paper outlining the rationale for the introduction of Arabic software by the government as part of its delivery of computers to the public schools. Coalition staff will meet with members of the higher education community to gain their insights and support for this initiative. (three weeks)*
- *Coalition members and staff will visit the Minister of Education and other Education Ministry officials to discuss the brief position paper and to persuade the Ministry to adopt Arabic language software. (one week)*

MODIFYING SCHOOL CURRICULA

Objective: *To introduce substantive changes in the public school curriculum designed to better prepare Jordan's public school students for an information-based economy and global competition.*

Strategy: *YEA-led business, higher education, and government advocacy programs.*

Action Plan:

- *Coalition staff will arrange business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. (one week)*
- *Coalition staff will review private sector initiatives focusing on curriculum reform that are planned or underway, and will provide results to Coalition members. (two weeks)*
- *Coalition members and staff will meet with Minister of Education and Education Ministry officials to determine the method by which the current public school curriculum is prepared; they will advocate transparency in future preparations. (one week)*

- *Coalition staff, assisted by private sector consultants, will develop a research document that focuses on both the skill requirements of the business community as Jordan moves toward realizing Vision 2020 objectives, and on examples of desired curricula in other countries; the research document will provide the Coalition with a model curriculum to present to the Minister of Education. Coalition staff will meet with members of the higher education community for information and support for this initiative. **(one month)***
- *Coalition staff will arrange a meeting for Coalition members with the Minister of Education, the Education Committee in Parliament, the Economic Consultative Council, and the High Education Forum; at the meeting, the Coalition will introduce a model public school curriculum, and an action plan to adopt it in the public schools. **(two weeks)***
- *Coalition staff will arrange a press conference to explain this business community initiative, and to put pressure on Minister of Education to adopt the model curriculum developed by the Coalition. **(one week)***

UPGRADING SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective: *To provide Jordan's public school students with a setting that enhances learning, and to improve the financial and non-financial conditions for public school teachers.*

Strategy: *YEA-led business, higher education, and government advocacy programs.*

Action Plan:

- *Coalition staff will arrange business association meeting to select participants for this initiative. **(one week)***
- *Coalition staff will secure data/information for Coalition members to review Jordan's education budget for the past three years to determine the trend in spending for education in general, and for school infrastructure in particular. **(two weeks)***
- *Coalition staff will engage an outside consultant who will determine the legislation/regulations that affect how money for education is allocated. **(two weeks)***
- *The outside consultant will prepare a position paper on those laws and regulations that require amendment and new laws and regulations to*

propose that will facilitate achieving the objective of upgrading public school infrastructure. (three weeks)

- *The Coalition of business associations will secure the participation of other, non-business parties with an interest in this issue, including the higher education community. This expanded Coalition will require Coalition staff to:*
 - *establish a database of Coalition constituents; (three weeks, then on-going)*
 - *prepare a position paper (and a one page summary of the position paper) justifying the need for upgrading school infrastructure; (two weeks)*
 - *determine personal relationships that exist between Coalition members and Ministry of Finance officials responsible for budget; assign Coalition members to visit Ministry officials to distribute issue summary (and position paper, when requested), discuss issue, request support for greater funding, and report findings back to Coalition staff; (three weeks)*
 - *determine the personal relationships that exist between Coalition members and members of Parliament; repeat process above; (three weeks)*
 - *develop a cadre of members of Parliament willing to introduce legislation and/or change regulations to improve teacher salaries; (two weeks)*
 - *organize a delegation of Coalition members to visit with the Minister of Education; the delegation will discuss the issue summary and ask for support; (one week)*
 - *arrange for visits for Coalition members with influential Jordanian organizations to elicit the support of such organizations and possible membership in the Coalition; ask influential organizations to make the same visits to Ministry of Finance officials, Parliament, and Ministry of Education officials; (three weeks)*
 - *arrange for a press conference to publicize the Coalition's campaign; (one week)*
 - ❑ *compile a list of reporters, including the wire services, television and radio stations, daily and weekly newspapers, and magazines; tell reporters about the Coalition; keep them*

informed about the issue and the progress the Coalition is making;

- ☐ *select an appropriate, visually interesting location to improve chances for coverage;*
- ☐ *prepare background sheet on Coalition, and include it and any recent articles that effectively describe the education infrastructure issue;*
- ☐ *issue press release after press conference is over;*
- *Prepare op-ed pieces on the need for upgrading school infrastructure for placement in leading Jordanian newspapers under signatures of influential citizens. (two weeks)*
- *Arrange for Coalition members to appear on electronic media and to be interviewed by the print media on the issue. (two weeks)*
- *Place an advertisement in a major Jordanian newspaper, describing the education infrastructure issue in detail, and seeking names of supporters for a database that can then be used to influence public officials. (one week)*

RECOMMENDATION FOR PRIORITIZING ADVOCACY PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Taking into consideration the fact that the government has already begun its campaign to significantly increase the number of computers in public schools, a strong argument can be made for choosing *improving school-based technology* as the Coalition's first objective. In this way, the Coalition can achieve, relatively speaking, quick success and credibility. It will also show government officials and the general public that the business community is ready and willing to complement, not duplicate, government efforts. Progress here, however, without initiating and eventually succeeding in the other Coalition objectives, means that students will have more technology to work with in the public schools, but will not have all the other factors critical to student achievement attended to.

Prioritizing the remaining objectives is fraught with difficulty. For example, choosing *infrastructure reform* as the second priority is a long-term proposition that is likely to encounter stiff government opposition, for obvious reasons, at least at the outset. On the other hand, infrastructure improvements are vital to the success of all other Coalition objectives. *Economic education* and *curricula reform* are not likely to be realized in the short-run because of anticipated government resistance. *Upgrading English language skills* is a relatively easy objective to initiate. It also complements recent government initiatives, and is likely to be welcomed by the Ministry of Education. However, should government acceptance be the main criteria for early adoption of a Coalition objective?

In sum, one can argue that there are no good criteria for prioritizing Coalition objectives. All objectives must be begun in tandem. They are all connected; each is a prerequisite for the others in terms of improving educational performance within the public schools, and upgrading critical worker skills.

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

May 1, 2000:

- YEA sends position paper and advocacy program to all Jordanian business associations, along with a letter inviting them to become a part of a business-led Coalition.

May 10, 2000

- YEA arranges for a meeting of all Jordanian business associations to discuss the position paper, the advocacy program, and formation of the Coalition.

May 20, 2000

- Second meeting of potential Coalition members. Coalition is formed, Chairman is appointed. Initial discussions on advocacy program, office space, letterhead, and hiring full-time staff.

May 23, 2000

- YEA staff prepares press release and arranges press conference, with Coalition members in attendance, launching Coalition.

June 10, 2000

- Third Coalition meeting to prioritize (and amend if necessary) the Coalition advocacy program, and the adoption and assignment of initiatives (action plans) by Coalition members. Coalition staff now on-board.

July 1, 2000

- Submission by Coalition members of revised (if necessary) action plans and timetables. Coalition discussion of submissions and further revisions in action plans and timetables.

July 15, 2000

- Simultaneous launching of all Coalition objectives. All Coalition objectives will be accompanied by strict timetables.